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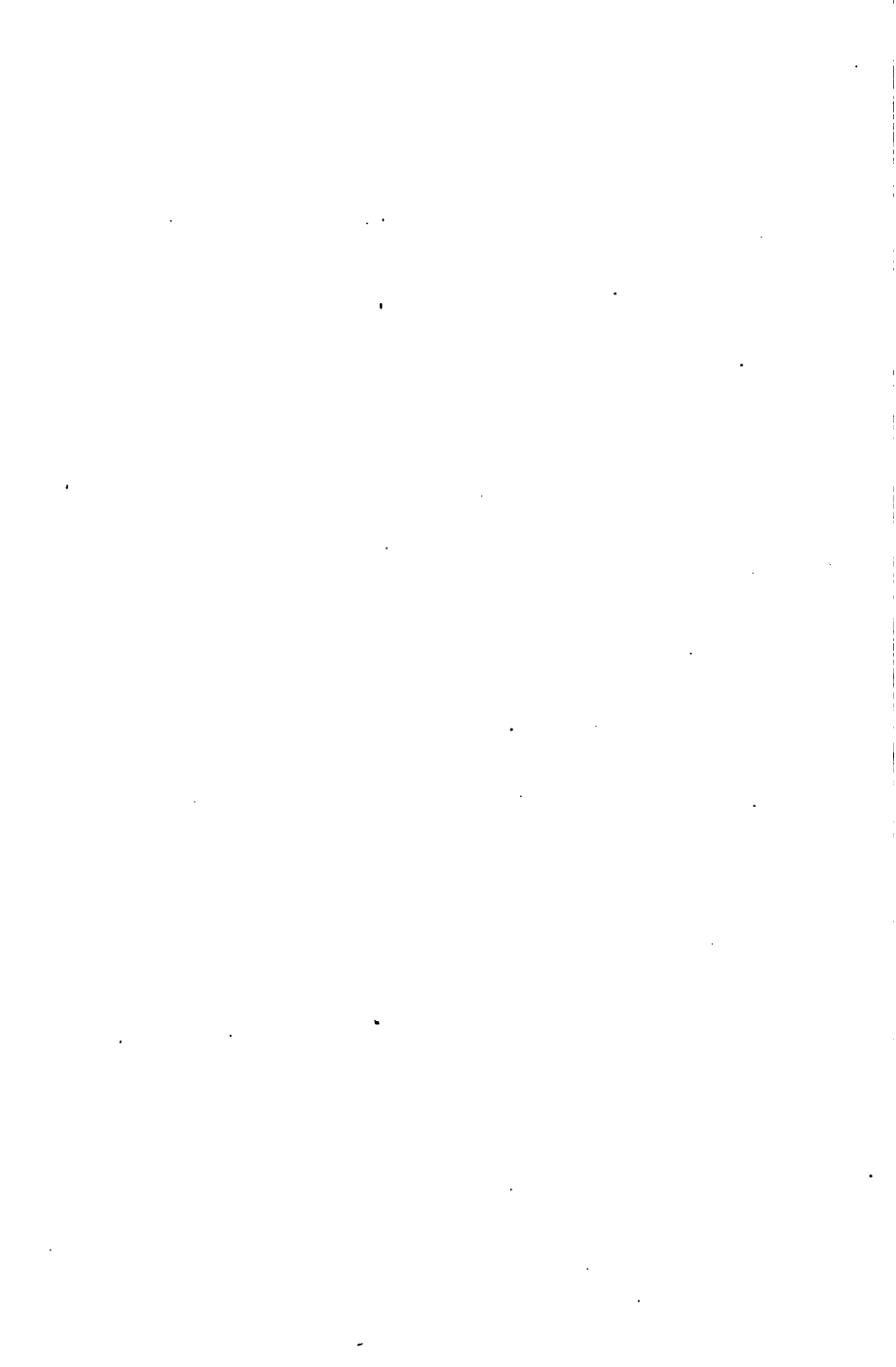
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NBI

Glynn, J.







SONGS

FROM THE SILENCE

A Book of Prison Verse

BY

JOHN. FRANCIS GLYNN



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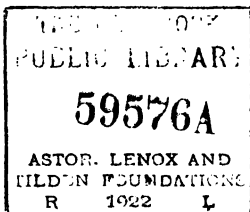
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INTRODUCTION

LESS than two months after the author was set free from the prison at Stillwater, Minnesota, I met him and he put his poems into my hands. Reading them, I had a poignant sense of beauty and pathos; the beauty that is song, the pathos of human Fate. I felt like one who finds a flower, dewy and fragrant, beside a dusty road. The wind bloweth where it listeth. There are lyrics in this book, so truly lovely, so unfeignedly simple and sincere, with such an infectious lilt and shine of color, that one's heart melts before them. I mean such things as Unfettered, Rose Petals, Song, Rube Robin, Dust Sanctuary, and others yet,—bits of entrancing melody, thrusts into the deeps of living. They constitute the testament of a very genuine poet. They have the unmistakable ring, the "lyric cry" that makes music in the ear, and goes to the universal heart of man. The voice is so authentic, the vision often so spiritual in its homely, disarming way, that it matters little if there be an occasional stammer in the utterance; I almost think it adds to the charm.

And so I wish the book the good luck it deserves, and predict that many will be grateful for this gift. That it comes out of a prison cell, lends a wistful quality to its note. But that appeal, save as it begets a sympathetic mood to receive the message, is not to be overstressed. Mr. Glynn's work can stand on its own merit; and it will.

RICHARD BURTON.

Ms. A. 9. 1. 2. 27

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE
"BROTHERHOOD IN GREY"
OF WHOM ITS AUTHOR IS
STILL A PART



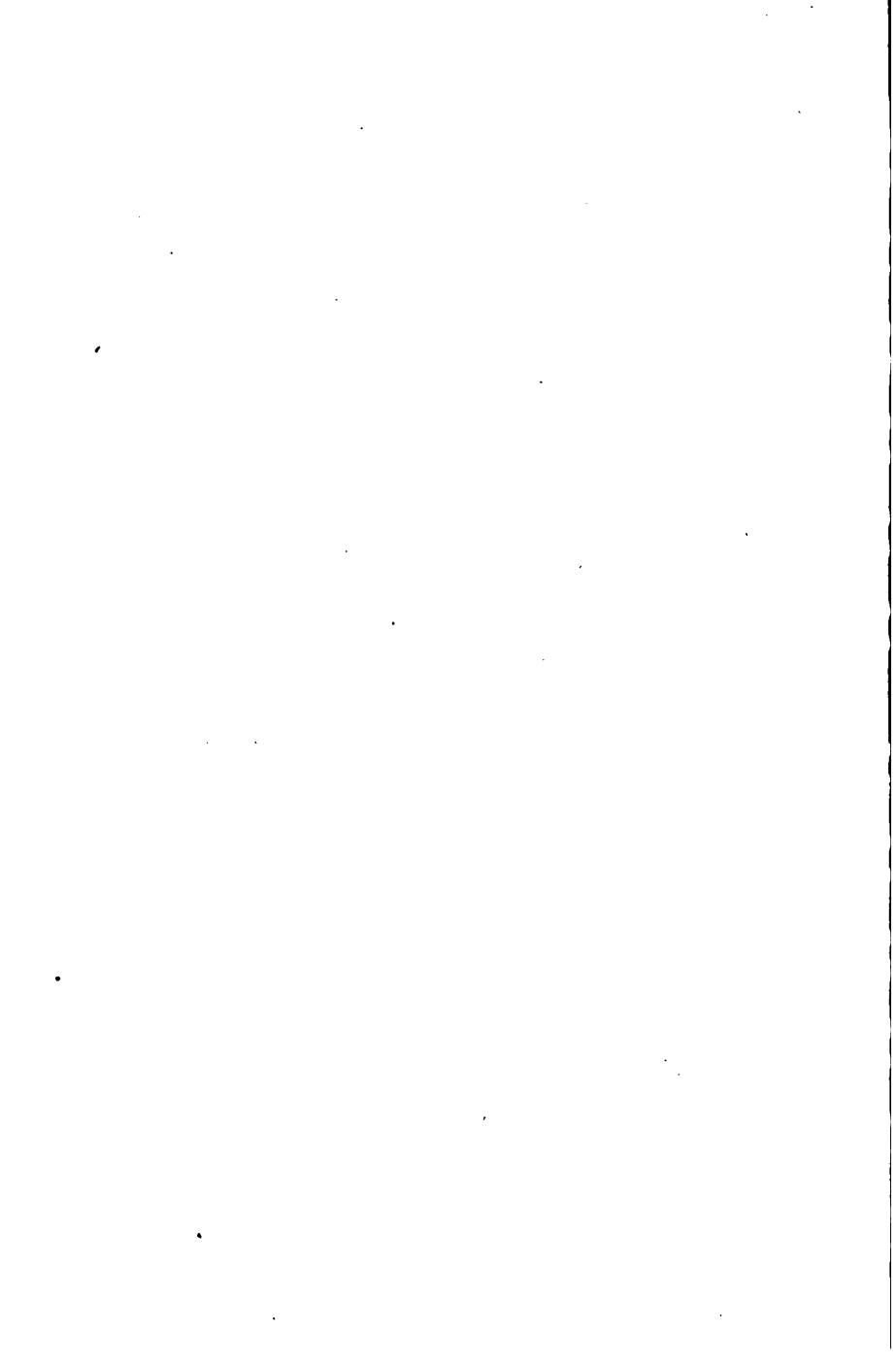
Song

To Beau "Esprit"

M OONLIGHT and singing breeze
In hazels by the path,
And hidden far in the accompanying trees
A nightingale to sing
Day's aftermath.

Starbeam and fallen dew,
Where the lone road winds grey,
And one love evermore remaining true,
Though other friendships fall
And pass away.

Daydawn and singing birds,
As the way leads on higher,
No more to falter, mute for lack of words,
Simple enough to sing,
The soul's desire.



PREFACE

I AM positively sure that nothing was ever farther from my thoughts than the writing of verse toward a possible book publication.

The verse I have written for the "Prison Mirror" (Stillwater, Minn.,) was written for the sheer love of the thing.

I was a long time in writing my output; most of my verse was written under very adverse circumstances—a line once formed must needs be remembered until the opportunity came to write it down.

Came a day when I began to notice that some of my stuff was being reprinted in newspapers, then in the magazines. Still I did not lose my head.

Press notices in many of the newspapers led me to entertaining the idea that perhaps I could conduct a "Colyum." I set out, then, to win space in the Departments run by B. L. T., Don Marquis, F. P. A., and other noted "Colyumists." I succeeded, and now am trying to sell my stuff to syndicates—just trying, that's all.

Personal letters came to me, most of them containing the suggestion that put my verse into book form.

The thought of publication frightened me at first; but, as you now see, even to the writing of a preface I have become reconciled.

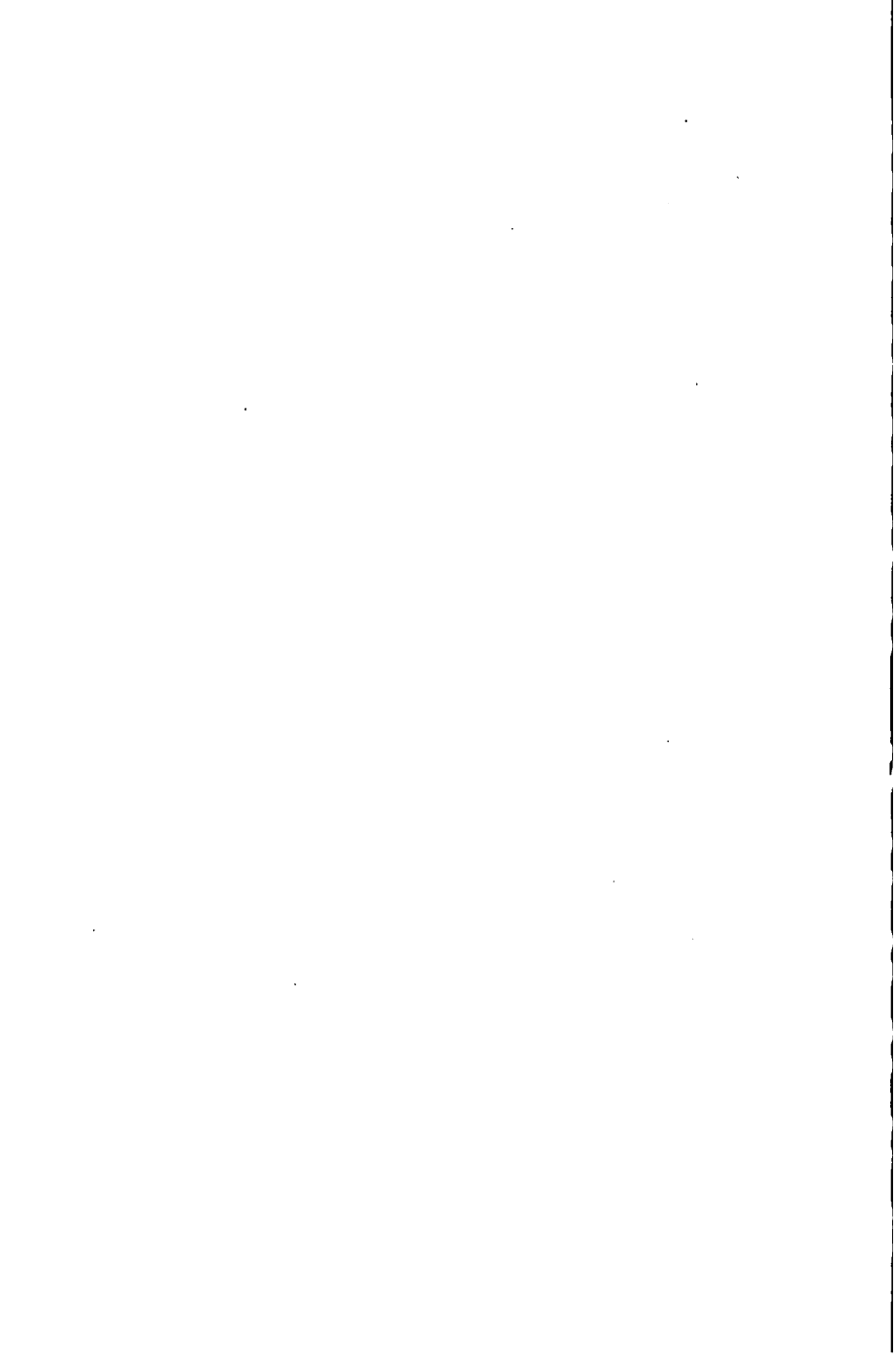
The basic thought in the publication of this book is, that an outside public may be led into the knowledge of the convicts' spiritual side.

Society, at large, has always been interested in the knowing of how convicts think, of what they think, how they feel, and what fortunes and vicissitudes a convict encounters in his narrow sphere.

In this little volume I have tried to give you the other side of the convict—the spiritual side.

It is but with this one pretention that I pass the book on to you—wishing for it only what it deserves.

J. F. G.

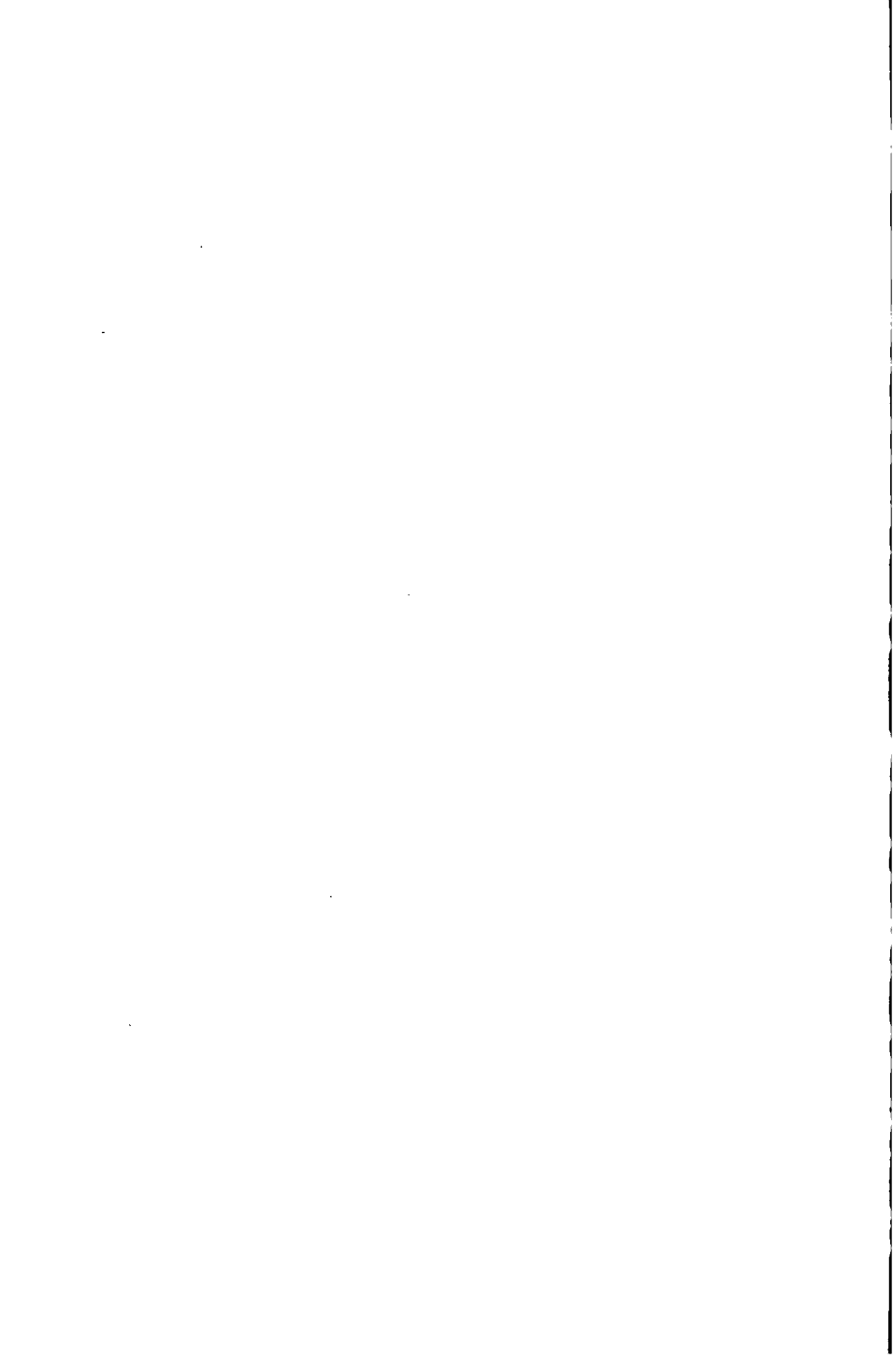


NOT the torn sails and scarred
hull of the ship which reaches
port at end of day shall be con-
demned until it has been asked:

“Where has she been?

*“Sailed she through calm or
storm?”*

*How long her way to harbor at
the end?”*



Songs From The Silence

Primrose Time

P RIMROSE time in Ireland,
And me in bolts and bars,
Meadows sweet with buds a-break,
And miles of jaunty cars—
But stay, avick, th' soul of me
Has gone to join th' pageantry,
I'm drinkin' in the music of the lark beneath th' stars.

Spring time, an' th' shamrocks
So tender green, aroo!
Every colleen in the land
An' gossoon on th' woo—
'Tis priest to shrive me of all sin,
The soul of me gone journeyin'
To see the Irish April skies put on their robe of blue.

Verily, Verily

T HE fool hath said—but from his lips—
“There is no loving God on high.”
But out beyond, where memory slips,
The things that ARE give him the lie.

For just as long as children pray,
And dew-wet violets dot the sod,
Behind men's lips their souls will say,
“There is a God! There is a God!

Theory

I HEARD her say, "I pity those poor convicts in
their lonely cell,
They do not know the woodland rose nor hear the tales
the woodfolk tell;
They do not heed the call to prayer, they miss
each day a love supreme.
God helping me, I will go there and I will carry
them a dream."

Fact

They placed him in a prison cell and put on him a
prison suit.
God gave him Dreams, so it befell he rose from mire
that clogs the brute.
They pigeonholed and numbered him, but he kept
faith and held a goal.
And stars and flowers in evening's dim conversed
with his unfettered soul.

Judge Not

A WRECK? Who gave you right to judge?
Oh, shame,
What know you of the iron street he
trod?
How dare you place DEFEAT against his
name,
Are you the mouthpiece of Almighty
God?

Are you the keeper of the judgment scroll,
The book wherein is writ God's awful
lore?
Silence! Each man is captain of his soul,
And captain be till God adds up the score.

Sufficiency

I DO not wish for candle, book or prayer,
When on that day the clock of time's run
down.

Do not, I beg of you, surmise despair,
And sing a hymn about a doubtful
crown.

I've had my heaven, after my own fashion,
So shall not miss the fruits of church
and creeds.

God knows my sin—one week of holy passion,
I would not blot by aid of bell or beads.

Ring down the curtain—why should I discover,
As the last petal of the rose be shed,
Life still holds sweet? Ah, was I not your
lover?

Your lips were freely mine—all has been
said.

Nonentity

WHO mocks at faith, or love, or charity,
Sees naught for joy in tangled glen or glade,
Gives cynic sneer to prayer at mother's knee,
Or kills, with scorn, the hope of trustful
maid—

'Twere better they receive of death's cold kiss,
Than linger tenant of Despair's abyss.

Rose Petals

WHEN you came singing,
Something cried, "Beware,
'Tis but a gossoon bringing
Blarney out of Clare."

When you came laughing,
A voice said, "Give no heed,
Philanderin' and chaffin'
Is a Clare lad's creed."

When you came smiling
To where I made the hay,
Oh, lad, lad, how beguillin'
Was tongue of you that day.

What's a tender greeting?
What's a kiss to share?
An' what's a heart's mad beating
To gossoons out of Clare?

A kiss—an' be that token
When I'm old and grey
I'll smile for soft words spoken
When a colleen made the hay.

Little Cell O' Dreams

O LITTLE cell of six by ten,
You're as a shrine to me,
I take my place in ranks of men
As the guard turns the key.

The magic of my yesterdays
Through the bars nightly streams—
You waft me to a boyhood white,
O little cell o' dreams.

O little cell where visions rise
And fairies hold full sway,
Bringing new splendor to the eyes
That knew but fear all day.

I think a God must count you part
Of Love—You hold its beams.
You are my solace through the night,
O little cell o' dreams.

A Woman's Way

COME to me now, dear heart, you who swore that
you loved me,
Placed none above me, in days that were rich
with my song.
Now I am dying—Boy, don't forget you have known
me,
Who else to own me, soul-scarred by your bitter
wrong?

If God has placed one atom of good deep within you
You'll think of the sin you sinned when I went
on the street
To get the gold that made you a prince of a fellow—
God, but you were yellow, yet I knelt low at
your feet.

Where are you now? What fresh face has took your
fancy?
God help the Ruth or Nancy, none but a God
can save
Them from your wiles, the sequence of your wooing,
You were my undoing, you made me a
Brothel slave.

You came, you saw a face full of innocent glory,
It was the old, old story. Leaving all joys be-
hind—
I had your promise, a future rosy and golden,
Blindly I went, holding the word of a thing
your kind.

Why do I still love you? My face has lost all beauty—
Vain now to speak of duty, expect of you to fold
My body to your bosom—It's the way of woman,
Still to be love-human, even tho' deformed and
old.

Oh, Boy, did you know, when you left me bent and
broken,
Why no word was spoken? Ah, within my
heart I knew
Nothing said could hold you from seeking out new
faces—
Their goal the brothel places that are filled by
such as you.

I ask no mercy for myself as life is near its ending—
With my last breath I'm sending to God on
high a prayer,
Not for her in brothel, who sold soul at your pleasure,
But mercy, in full measure, for you who placed
her there.

The Poet

FROM his attic, starved, neglected and obscure,
He saw the hand of God in fields and streams;
To him all things were beautiful and pure—
His God had given him dreams.

He gave the world a message, "Climb thou higher,"
He told of love sublime—with burning pen
He wrote his creed of beauty, to inspire
The sluggish hearts of men.

The blind world, all unheeding, passed him by,
And so—just like a bird with broken wing
Lies down, and ne'er attempts to wing the sky—
The poet ceased to sing.

One day the blind world paused, for it had learned
That death had knocked upon an attic door,
That he, whom they'd neglected so and spurned,
Would sing no more.

And then the world (oh grave, where is thy sting?)
Picked up his sheaf of verse, and, having read,
Passed on its way, thoughtful, and murmuring,
"What tender things he said."

Idealism

A HOUSE that nestles snug beneath a hill,
To go to when the daily toil is o'er;
A neighbor 'cross the way, you greet as Bill,
A rose vine spilling sweets beside the door.
Not seeking God in skies, but only where
Two little arms just hug a fellow tight
Just 'ere the sandman comes—a bedside prayer—
From one with love-lit face at candlelight.

“’Twas the Night Before Christmas”

CHRISTMAS Eve within a prison, and the olden
dreams are thronging,
Finding shelter in the souls of all the convicts as
they sleep;
And the night-guard on his duty hears the whispers,
brought by longing,
“Mother, ain’t it time to tell me of the shepherds
and the sheep?”

Reckless rovers of an off-trail fraught with outlawry
and scheming,
Each and all are journeying backward to a mystic
memory fold;
Love at heartstrings plays a music, sweet, seraphic in
their dreaming,
They are listening to a story, it’s the sweetest ever
told.

They are kids again at Christmas, with a mother fond
to hold them,
Titanic hearts that know not fear, that would not
fawn to God,
Nestle now in rapturous slumber, and, while loving
arms enfold them,
Murmur, oh, the dear, dear baby, fearing neither
wrath nor rod.

Draw the curtains softly, angels, when you cease your
song of gladness,
The Christ of Olivet has seen—and I know a God-
head smiled;
Draw the curtain softly, angels, o’er the cells that
house no sadness—
Peace dwells in walled-up cities, they are dream-
ing of a CHILD.

A Prison Escape

I BROKE away to a June day's gladness,
From frowning bars and a stern grey
wall;
My feet danced light through a dewy garden,
I was a part of the curlew's call.

Oh, I was one with the tangled grasses,
I said "Good morn" to the laughing
wheat;
Washed my heart in the crooning waters,
And happy I whispered, "life is sweet."

Shriven I've been by a wild lane lyric,
Heard in the land of blossom and bee;
Kissed by the shifting light and color,
And Ol' Bob White stabbed the soul of
me.

Morning Prayer

I DO not ask that I may trod
Only the flowery paths of life,
I ask but this: For courage, God,
In strife.

If I should meet but sorrow's blight,
Grant me in vales of pain
The power to still rise up, and fight
Again.

I'd drink of life's most rosy wine,
But grant this prayer, God, please:
That I may drink, without a whine,
The lees.

An Angel Shall Guard Thee

ADREAM in the night
Passed the threshold of shame,
In garments, pure white—
And I woke with the splendor of eyes,
And lips that spoke softly—your name.

A wonderful thing,
In the hush—all is well—
The stir of a wing—
Has a great God forgot all the sin,
To send me a vision of—Belle?

Love's token, supreme,
Has been given to me:
A beautiful dream—
I am out with you, sweet, in the dusk,
A nightingale sings—I am free!

A touch that is prayer—
God, I thank Thee for this:
In dreams I may share
The rare smile, and the charm, and the thrill
Of lips meeting lips in a—kiss.

June

TIME to rise up and be glad,
Ain't you in love with the dew?
Time to hold hands, lass and lad,
God is now smiling on you.

The earth is awake to the love,
To the joy of a mother-bird's croon—
The rose-bush is spilling out sweetness and filling
Your soul with the charms of—just June.

The Contrast

ONE came to me and told me to "Be Good"—
Her face was cold, and her voice harsh the while.
She spoke of God and human-brotherhood,
And never once, I noticed, did she smile.

I wanted shelter from the sleet and rain;
I voiced my need, she answered not my plea.
I asked for succor, and I got disdain;
Cold words instead of Christ-like charity.

Another came. To her I told my plight—
Her garments and her gaze spoke her disgrace—
"What! Broke and hungry on this dismal night?"
And tenderness lit up her sodden face.

Giving her all, these words she softly said:
"I pity you. I, too, have known and seen"—
Kneeling that night beside a squalid bed
I talked to Christ of Mary Magdalene.

Futility

I'LL have no more of roses,
I said. Then closed the door.
To past delights, to future joys,
I'll give my thoughts no more.

I thought the house was vacant,
I'd thrown the key away—
But, oh, the little wistful dreams
That haunt me night and day.

Done! Done! I cried, not knowing
I'd placed my soul in pawn;
And now I'm as a dying bird,
Helpless to sing the dawn.

The Broken Lute

I HEAR my neighbor singing in the glow
Of eventide, to lull a babe to sleep.
I listen and I sit alone and weep,
For once I sang an evening tune,
"husho."

Ah! Once I held a little babe, and knew
That life was beautiful and grand and
good,

Ah, once I wore the badge of motherhood—
Forgive me, neighbor, that I envy you.

I sit alone, while twilight shadows fall,
With only memories to fill my day.
I cannot sing, I cannot even pray,
For ever to my breast there comes the
call.

O God, To feel a babe in my embrace,
To have again the gift that binds, en-
dears—

I am as one grown old with bitter tears,
I cannot sing, nor kiss a rosy face.

Why do I feel this bitterness tonight?
I grieve because my little babe took
wing;

I yearn for lullabys I cannot sing,
While you are basking in your world's
delight.

O, neighbor mine, my envy is not shame,
For I have right to ask no less than this:
A little babe to rock to sleep, and kiss—
Can you send censure, or see ought of blame?

I have no babe to press close to my breast,
And I do sing a slumber song no more ;
No broken toys lie scattered on my floor—
O God above, I doubt, if it is best.
I should not judge if it be right or
wrong,
But still, O God, I want my child once more.
Is it as happy on the other shore?
O, neighbor mine, I envy you your song.

A Better Bit O' Road

SURE, I know that you've had cryin',
I've had cryin' too.
Ain't no use in us denyin'
That some days are blue.
But when trails seem gettin' harder,
Brace up 'neath your load
An' press on—a little farther
There's a better bit o' road.

Gosh, I sure have oft been given
Rows quite hard to hoe—
We can't always be a-livin'
Where the roses grow.
Got to bear a lot an' ponder
When we feel th' goad,
It can't last, for just out yonder
There's a better bit o' road.

Let's not talk so much of trouble,
Let us get to know,
Sized to others, ours a bubble
On the stream o' woe.
We're too prone to make resistance,
We forget we sowed—
Cheer up. Look a little distance,
There's a better bit o' road.

Hope

DAWN floats its golden banner o'er the
hills,
In tangled copse the songsters greet the
morn;
From tiny throats this wonder message spills:
God's greatest gift, a perfect day is born.
A gift to clown or king, and lo, it brings
Seed for the sowing of great happenings.

Song

ON the road to Maytime,
Glory's in the sod,
Where the infant violet
Sends a smile to God.
Hear the wild abandon
Of the feathered clan—
On the road to May-time
With the Pipes of Pan.

On the road to May-time,
Hum of busy bees,
Bush and sward arrayed in
Sea green liveries.
Time to shape a rose-dream,
Loaf awhile with me,
On the road to May-time,
Perfect Piety.

On the road to May-time,
Laughter running sweet,
There's a song upon the lip,
Dancing in the feet.
Soul ease in the sunshine,
Heart ease in the blue—
On the road to May-time,
God, and Love, and You.

Petition

I'VE not forgotten, though in alien places,
For every wanderer must have his star.
I still seek you among the thousand faces
I meet—and God knows, Girl, I've ventured far.

I wonder does the harvest moon bring token
Of things that were, before I broke the spell.
Oh, to recall the bitter words once spoken
That agonized us both in a farewell.

God must wipe out the stain, it was not malice,
Only a last appeal to hold you mine.
Time has taught me to mold a finer chalice
Of love. "Wilt thou not taste the purer wine?"

Rosary of a Tramp Royal

I LOVE the world and deem its kisses sweet,
I love the storms I meet upon the way.
I've tasted of both cups—success, defeat,
And in it all I've had no cause to say
That it whipped me too hard or was too rough.
I ain't the one to be a-damning fate,
And I ain't never cried "I've had enough."
It takes it all, the crooked and the straight.
I've had my share of wormwood and of gall—
I ain't a-kicking none, the cup is mine.
I have no cause to mock a God's design—
I love the world, 'cause I ain't seen it all.
I've met with good and bad in many places,
And some men's hearts they loomed as black as
night;
And others had the good look in their faces
That speaks of manhood, purity and right.
I've seen men broke upon the wheels of labor,
I've seen girls rise from out the pits of hell—
So you can see I've cause for saying, neighbor,
"Tomorrow's yet to come, and all is well,"
If sorrow keeps a-holding me in thrall,
I ain't a-going for to cuss and rail—
I does the best I can upon the trail,
And love the world, 'cause I ain't seen it all.
And sometime, somewhere, in this glory land
I'm going to meet up with a clinging she.
And then I'll see the way, and understand
The happiness that lies in front of me.
And then there'll be less heartache, Bo., and pain,
And I'll be booked for many rose-strewn days;
I will not hanker for the road again,
But see it all as in a magic maze.
The wanderlust has long been pals with me,
But there's a sweeter heart-throb to the call
Of One God-sent—Oh, I ain't seen it all,
I love the world—it holds my clinging SHE.

Ol' Bob White

GONE are the nooks where I used to romp and play,
Gone are the vales where the rich red roses
 sway,
Far is the goal, but the beacon, Hope, burns bright—
 I hear your voice from Eden, calling, Ol' Bob
 White.

I'm dreaming, I'm dreaming, and my dreams will all
 come right—
I hear your voice from Eden, calling, Ol' Bob White.

Still I remember Miss April's tender rain,
Still I remember the heart-stabs in a lane,
Still I'm a part of the ever-steady light
That guides all wanderers home again to Ol'
 Bob White.

I'm dreaming, I'm dreaming, of a dawn that follows
 night—
A voice cries, hope, hope always, comrade, Ol' Bob
 White.

Pre Mortem

I SHALL not prize the gentle touch
 That fold my hands, when cold—
But, oh, I can't prize overmuch
 The hands I may not hold.

I shall not prize the silent tear
 Love sheds o'er coffin white—
But, oh, if I could only hear
 A word of love tonight.

I shall not care, when I am dead,
 For lips that touch my brow—
But, oh, I'd give my soul for red
 Warm lips to kiss me now.

The Singing Verse

I LIKE the little verse that sings its way into the heart,
The verse that makes a fellow feel that he is still a part
Of bird and bee and singing stream—oh, joy of the refrain,
The little verse that spatters like a tender April rain.

Perhaps it sings heart yearnings for the dawn or for the dew,
Or the sheen of fresh young grasses, where the violets peep through.
No matter what its theme may be, it runs so that it seems
Its only mission is to dance and tangle in our dreams.

Just as the perfume lingers from the rose bush on the lawn,
Just as one holds the song of thrush once heard on slopes of dawn,
So, too, we keep the little verse to hum it o'er again,
The little verse that spatters like a tender April rain.

Sackcloth and Ashes

DO you remember,
Or send a dreaming gaze
Along the trail of Used-to-be,
Our purple days?

Oh, I recall it,
And all its pain I bear:
Mad dancing in the feet of you,
Sunshine, your hair.

Lips full of invite,
And cheeks roses fresh-blown
We dreamed we'd sing together, Girl—
I sing alone.

Invitation

THERE'S a trail just made for two.
May I take it, dear, with you?
And we'll know the primrose dawns
And the days of sapphire blue.
There are aisles of magic, sweet,
Where the crooning waters meet,
And the dawn breaks on a laughing lane
With rosy-sanded feet.

Won't you come along with me
To the blossom and the bee?
And we'll catch the violet's signal
Only eyes of love may see.
There's a mystic afterglow,
Where the dogwood bursts like snow,
There's a haze that shelters beauty
Only hearts of faith may know.

Let us go where nature seems
All at one with singing streams,
Let us mold our future morrows
And rebuild our broken dreams.
Through the lanes of goldenrod
And the lure of fresh-turned sod,
We'll go back again to childhood
And walk hand in hand—with God.

The City

WITH grip stern and relentless you hold me,
I have drunk of your passion and spell;
As a potter you shape me and mold me,
And I cannot escape from your shell.
You have promised me Song, fame's bright token,
But you made me a blank and a blot—
I am old and I'm bent and I'm broken,
Yet a fool can't forget he forgot.

Came the voice of your fame to far Eden,
Where white souls harbor sunsets and dawns,
One gave answer to you, never heeding
That your game, to be played, needed pawns,
One gave answer to you, and went feeling
That your gateway led on to fair goal—
Superman! In your slaying and stealing,
Set me free to return to my soul!

I have tried to escape from your fetter,
From your granite that towers to the skies,
There's no dupe in your kingdom knows better
Than my heart that your soft words are lies.
To your siren-call I was but human,
And I strove for things out of my ken—
Now I'm part of the hard laugh of woman,
And the sneers of your soul-broken men.

Set me free! Let me back to my dreaming,
To the dream I have loved so—and lost;
I am weary of days mixed with scheming,
(Oh, I know what embracing you cost!)
I am soul-sick each day as I gaze at
The vile stuff from your shuttle that's thrown—
You're called Vulture—and naught to amaze at,
For a vulture leaves nothing, save bone.

Watch me well, for one day I'll need urging
 To content with your passion-made creed,
For of late I feel strange things come surging
 To a soul crying out in its need;
Watch me well, though I'm low of the lowly;
 For one day I'll not answer your nod—
I shall break for the paths that are holy
 And renew my acquaintance with God!

A Little Way

I'VE such a little way to go,
Come close to me.
A little time in which to sow
Eternity.
O, Friend, let's brighten up the day,
For soon, too soon, we pass away.

We've but a little time to live,
To show our worth;
A little time in which to give
Some action birth—
Action which makes, with cheerful smile,
Less sinful some poor brother's trial.

A little time we have to cheer—
Oh, comrade, speak
The word that somehow dries the tear
On someone's cheek.
How shall we answer Mary's Son
When our time comes? "What hast thou
done?"

Somewhere Beyond

SOMEWHERE beyond there is a goal,
Beyond where mountains rise,
For we have dreams within our soul,
And star-dust in our eyes.

Then on, and follow down the miles,
Where luring lights still gleam;
And be it tears or be it smiles,
Please God, we'll keep the dream.

Pagan

I LOVE the day a storm has birth,
Through gales I love to fare—
The bolt of fire seen from the earth
Is just a mighty prayer.

I love the wind, the wild hawks' flight
'Neath skies that hold no blue;
I glory in the darkest night,
When not a star peeps through.

I love a storm; I love the hail,
The oceans surge and swell.
When I no more thrill to a gale
Write "Finis" and "Farewell."

The Return

I KNEW some day I would come back
Soul sick from prison throng;
And, oh, I found my little shack
Ran derelict with song.
I knew Faith's arms, full welcoming,
Love said: "We've waited long."

The streamlet played a lyric tune
I had not heard before;
The bird folk came a-pair, to croon
Their hymns beside my door.
"God's love," I feel old age assurge
With dreams I knew of yore.

A Song in March

SPRINGTIME, and love time—
Oh, what joys to come!
A tender violet morning,
And the wild bee's hum.

Dream time, and glad time,
"Little folks" at dark;
A perfect sky of sapphire
At one with the lark.

Bliss time and kiss time,
Jack out with his Jill;
The fall of silver showers
On a summit hill.

Fair time, and prayer time,
Sunset's flag unfurled—
God's up there in His heaven,
"All's right with the world!"

Recompense

I'VE launched a thousand ships upon the sea,
Titan their shape, sturdy and strong.
It matters not that none returned to me,
That all my ships of dream went wrong.

It matters not, those rose-built dreams a-miss,
One little prayer from my white lips—
One little prayer, sturdy and strong, 'tis this:
"Thank God I've launched a thousand
ships."

Rube Robin

HEY, Rube Robin, I'm in love with you.
Last night I heard you singing in the dusk and
dew,
And I got to feeling an angel wing had stirred—
Hey, Rube Robin,

You're
a
Moon-
drunk
Bird!

Hey, Rube Robin, with your trills and slips,
Your lyric's like the kisses from a maid's red lips;
Your melody is sweeter than nun at evening
prayer—

Hey, Rube Robin,
You're
a
Witch
Out
There!

Hey, Rube Robin, from a paradise,
God sent you to sing splendor into sinners' eyes.
Go, and God go with you, where dew-wet roses
shine—

Hey, Rube Robin,
You're
a
Pal
of
Mine!

Supplication

O, DO not pity me because my bars
Shut out all glory at the day's bright close.
For I still send new longings to the stars.
And voice "Good morning" to a dew-wet
rose.

I pray thee, list me not as one in shame,
For I have dreams (not kin to crime or
cells)

Charged with potentiality of flame,
So am content to wear the cap and bells.

You threaten all the edifice of dreams,
That make my cell a calm and holy place.
If from your pen of logic ever streams:
"He cannot happy be in his disgrace."
Call me but "sinner," oh, the sting! It grips
As a harsh sentence from beloved lips.

Miracle

A GARDEN in bloom,
A song from a bough;
A witching perfume,
A whisper, a vow.

A shadowy glade,
A kiss—only human.
In one breath a maid,
The next breath a woman.

Mister Mornin'

MORNIN', Mister Mornin',
Jest here frum the slopes o' dawn,
Bringin' sunshine foh the roses,
An' the jewels foh the lawn.
You has got our hearts a-singin'
Wid the epic ob your plea—
An' my pus'nal ultimatum's
You is high-top quality.

Mornin', Mister mornin',
You is shore our guest today.
Foh the chillen am a-rompin'
Where the honeysuckles sway;
An' the sunlight am a-dancin'
On the fields ob heavenly dew—
An' the lanes am wild wid music,
Mister mornin', cause ob you.

Hope Eternal

MY boat is now wrecked on the beach,
I'm a part of a dead-fruit desire;
The height of my dream's beyond reach,
But my soul is a-fire.

I'm here in the blackest of night,
It's a very long journey to dawn,
Hope clings—far ahead is the light—
And I won't be a pawn.

Sestina Of A Scamp Royal

SPEAKIN' as Kiplin', I 'ave doped it out
That Skirts make this 'ere world one glad, sweet
song.

Why, I 'ave 'it all lanes of Wanderlust,
An' I've met Janes in dance 'alls an' in field—
Janes full of blessin' an' Janes full of bunk,
But take 'em all an' all, an' you 'ave Gawd.

An' I 'ave felt I'd like to write to Gawd
An' thank 'im for the Frails that 'e puts out.
You 'ave to 'ave no 'eart to claim this bunk—
When a Jane greets a bum 'ope sings a song,
An' 'e feels like 'e'd love to plow a field
An' quit th' redeye an' th' Wanderlust.

Of course I do not knock th' Wanderlust,
I've found hit bloomin' good, so 'elp me Gawd!
I'd rather 'ave a stew out in th' field
Than any feed a Pullman coon rigs out.
I 'ave th' 'abit of th' robin's song
An' 'aving all th' stars above me bunk.

I 'ave known Frails that fill a guy with bunk;
I've met an 'eap of them in Wanderlust,
Some flashed their lingerie in ribald song,
An' Rahablike, led men away from Gawd.
But most Skirts are as lights, that ne'er go out,
To guide th' wanderer from marshy field.

If fate 'as made our lot a thorny field,
An' we must use a box car as our bunk,
The dim flare of 'ope's candle can't go out
If somewhere, back before th' Wanderlust,
There was a Frail who nightly asked her Gawd
To bless us an' keep on our lips th' song.

Back comes that old an' 'alf-forgotten song,
Just as each Spring brings violets to th' field;
Back comes th' face of 'er you liked to Gawd,
An' something stirs your slumber where you
bunk.
Th' thought of some girl comes, th' Wander-
lust
Begins to stale—You're Down but are not Out.

Love's old sweet song, devoid of lure an' bunk,
Is found in every field of Wanderlust—
An' some pure Frail of Gawd cries, "Down, not
Out."

Jim Riley

I GAVE my heart and soul a holiday.
The "Songs O' Cheer," as written by Our
Jim,
Came to me and my eyes are soft and dim.
Quite suddenly the stern skies lost their grey.
You are not dead, Jim, you are "just away;"
You live in throats of songsters on a limb;
You live in singing streams tended by
Him,
And in wood-haunts where little children play.
You're with us, Jim, as long as hearts may
thrill
To lips of laughter and to merry smile,
You're part of perfume that the roses spill,
And of the twilight's holy afterwhile;
You're part of the homegoing, hopeful
throng—
You're with us, Jim, in violet vales of
song.

Heaven

A ROO, sum it up, an' then love it:
A lane that goes smilin' each day;
A sky brimmed wid blue up above it;
A "green" toward which all lovers stray.
A "green," mind you, close to the mount'in,
A jug o' fine dew, an', be cripes!
Colleens that would never know countin'
Wid McMahan there squeezing the pipes.
Sum it up wid its every night dancin'—
Ain't it heaven just made to one's taste?
If 'tis not, then put it on Nora chancin'
By wantin' me arm round her waist.

Undefeated

T WAS yesterday I sent my ships to sea,
With knowledge deep in heart their port was
sure.

One faith, another Love—an argosy
To breast the wildest storms, and to endure.

Ah, God! the ships I captained yesterday
Are broken now, waved-washed 'gainst rocky
shore.

I hear my friends, who watched the venture, say:
“He was unfit, he'll send ships out no more.”

Little ye know, I have surprise for thee,
I'm building now another ship for sea.

“'Twas yesterday I built my castle grand,
With joy to know my worth to build in Spain.
I gathered all the pure things of the land,
And placed them block on block to meet the
strain.

Ah, God! The house I built—my grandest thing—
With the first storm of discontent, it fell.

The crowd stood by, I heard it murmuring:
“He was unfit to rear such citadel.”

Little ye know, I have surprise for you,
I'm planning now to build my house anew.

Benediction

SOME day, when all the fields are sweet, I shall
return again,

To where the roses nod and greet the south wind in
the lane;

Once more to bid for and repeat the olden holy pain.

The bird folks know when comes the time for
mating.

And I shall see you face to face some starlit, dewy
night,

And take my old accustomed place, where dogwood
blossoms white;

Once more to know the pure embrace that made all
songs ring right,

In that homehut, sanctified by years of waiting.

And God will bless the road a husk will take from
prison bars,

And, somewhere in the blessed dusk, a soul shall sing
the stars;

There shall be myrtle, rose and musk, to efface all the
scars,

Brought on by years of dead sea fruit's desiring.

Yes, I shall come as sinners creep within a church to
pray,

And we shall let the dead past sleep and face the
grander day.

Faith shall be sown, and we shall reap the fruit of faith
always,

And Love shall walk beside us, never tiring.

Fidelity

THANK GOD! my name is there among
the list
Of those who strove to win your heart
and hand.

You did not send me from you, dear, unkissed,
So I have solace in my desert land.

The Youth that walks with you to-night, does
he
Begrudge me of my bliss 'neath alien
stars,
Because I have had more than courtesy—
One kiss divine to touch my wounds to
scars?

I hold it blest, and do not strive to fill
Love's chalice with a lower, cheaper
bliss.

I was your lover—am your lover still—
And I shall keep the memory of your
kiss.

Resignation

WHEN I am dead—
If some wee chap, ill-clad and poorly fed,
Will come to gaze on me, then turn away
To tell I fed and housed him one cold day,
I will not fear, so much, what Christ will say,
When I am dead.

When I am cold—
If man or woman, bent with toil, or old,
Will say of me: "He helped to pay my rent,"
I rather think 'twill give me calm content,
When I am cold.

When death appears—
I hope some slender Frail can say, through tears,
"He knew my sin, but, oh, he lifted me!
Others gave hate, but only kindness he—"
I'll know the grave gained not a victory,
When I am dead.

Ships That Pass in the Night

THERE'S an ache in the heart of a poor little ship, and the port is a hell where she docks; her sails are in tatters, and she's lost the grip that would keep her away from the rocks. Her cheeks are too red to be real, and her eyes mark her salvage to all she may meet. A thing to be pitied, a thing to despise—she is only a ship of the street.

Yet one day a trim craft, white-souled, unafraid, in the land of the long, long ago, believed a man's promise, believed, was betrayed, in a garden where girl roses grow. So soon cast adrift, and with no name of wife, now she faces the wild storms that beat against her frail form on the ocean of life—she is only a ship of the street.

A poor little ship of the street, see her creep from a brothel where day hides her shame. She's brazen, yet fearful, where shadows are deep, for the hunters are out—and she's Game. She's game for the brutes who may stab her through lust, pay a price and then safely retreat. Their victim goes on and dare not ask a crust of the world—she's a ship of the street.

Yet from such little ships alone can be learned, what He suffered, who died on a tree. She knows what it is to be spit on and spurned by those who preach love's charity; who sneer at her sin and spurn her for her guilt, place an iron in her soul, at white heat, forgetting that once on a Cross, blood was spilt for the sake of the Ships on the street.

Easter Thoughts

A GAIN the vernal time, Spring's soul awakes,
And Earth again to life, in gladness breaks.

Bles't Eastertide! when o'er the cross of pain
The Crown of Peace and Joy throws light again.

Again the lillies white, whose fragrant breath
Whisper their victory o'er seeming death.

And to my heart a heavenly voice speaks low:
"Child of my love, awaken thou and grow.

Form buds of Hope, and soon in joyous thought
Their fruit shall grow—glad deeds, in kindness
wrought."

But to that call my weary heart replies:
"So dark the soil where now my spirit lies.

Give me Thy smile, Dear God, to light the way,
Help me to grow and bloom Thy flower
alway."

Stand Fast

H OW goes the fight?
O, comrade, lose or gain,
Stand Fast!

Defeat may scar the bravest heart.
May sorrow, with her overwhelming train,
Say this of thee:
"He played the nobler part."

The Stolen Kiss

THERE was a lad who loved a miss—they both
were young, perhaps 'twas wrong—
But, as he saw the stolen kiss, a wood-thrush burst the
air with song;

The blue bells rang a golden peal as they heard words
the Jonquil said
To lovely Crocus—words so real, she blushed and
bowed her yellow-head.

And then the drowsy honey-bee—in spite of all her
queenly pose—
Cried out “You’re my affinity!” as he caressed a dam-
ask rose,

The Oriole began to tell his love for shy Miss Bobo-
link;
The Butter-Cup, in mossy dell, answered the Poppy,
wink for wink;

The Myrtle ran along the wall to kiss a Cowslip in the
fen;
Rube Robin made a morning call, and lingered long
with Jenny Wren.

The Weeping Willow, by the mill, bent low to kiss the
rivulet;
Even the lowly Daffodil blushed when the Aster whis-
pered “pet.”

The Morning Glories stayed an hour or more beyond
their usual time
To hear from forest and from bower the music that
fond lovers rime.

And God looked down upon a wood, to see the Oak
woo Columbine,
Then smiled and said, "The world is good; I'm glad
those happy folk are Mine."

There was a laddie loved a lass; perhaps 'twas wrong,
but we think this
From seeing what has come to pass—'Tis Not a Crime
to Steal a Kiss!

Dusk Sanctuary

GOD of the Hagers, of the Ishmael strain,
Shrive me, I pray.
I've made a cross—its every weight is pain,
I've lost the way.

Shrive me, O God, for still behind me lie
Dark days of grief,
The tasks half done—oh, poignant memory
Of unbelief.

Night is at hand, lo, the day's disk is dimmed!
Grant me thy dole.
Twilight is grey, my lamp is yet untrimmed—
Succor my soul!

Trembling I cry to Thee, humbly I kneel,
Give me of sign.
Grant, O Compassionate, that I may feel
I still am Thine.

Untasted Sweets

A STOLEN kiss from you,
A bartered kiss from her;
Remembering gives me no pang
And names give no heart-stir.

The kiss from one unknown—
That kiss shall ever live,
It blows across my memory,
The kiss she dared not give.

The Price of Madonnahood

THE Rock-A-By-Lady ain't singing tonight,
The little white hearse has been there,
There's violets still wet o'er the grave of a mite,
And a cradle don't rock at her chair.
There's no damp, rosy mouth, demanding its kiss—
Does she doubt that above He knows best,
As the little red shoes of a sweet dainty Miss,
Tear-stained, are clasped close to her breast?

There's a smile that is wan, a wound that won't scar.
And her sky is so gloomy and grey,
Her craft has broke anchor to journey a-far
From its port in sweet Rock-A-By-Bay.
The house is so quiet there's scarcely a sound,
A mother rocks silent and sad;
Her breast has the spear, her soul is thorn-crowned,
She has lost all the heaven she had.

An Hour In The Garden is given to all,
She has hers as she rocks to and fro,
For tonight as the shadows of dusk 'gin to fall
She can't sing her accustomed "hush-o!"
The cradle is empty and babe's gone away,
The pink little form's 'neath the sod—
O Hush-A-By-Lady, your babe is at play
Tonight in the nursery of God.

My Wish

SOME day I must take "30" from the hook,
When that time comes, I pray of you, forget
That I was outcast, numbered as a crook,
For on that day I'd want of you to let
Me lie in some loved spot where children go
To play and romp with happy laugh and song;
I think, perhaps, that I might catch the glow
Of purity, that I have missed so long.

Oh, do not lay me where the wild winds blow,
I've had enough of wildness. Let me rest
In some quiet place, where tender flowers grow,
And have some little maid place on my breast,
With simple prayer, a flower of purest white.
Some flower that seems as tho 'twas angel-
kissed.

Ah, yes, when I have bid this world Goodnight,
I'll want, at last, the things I've always missed.

Knowledge

HE wrote of Pain, and at his word
The world cried: He knew Tragedy;
Grief came and knocked—the angels heard
From his white lips: God, pity me.

Calling to Jim

A SONG of long ago—
Come back, Jim, and sing the glow
Of a meadow in the gloaming, where the dogwood
bursts like snow;
Sing a bird, with joy insane,
Down a jasmine-scented lane,
And the sweet of blooming clover newly
washed by April rain.

Sing, as once you used to sing,
Of a magic mystic spring,
Have the rosebuds tell the secret that each bee is
whispering.
Hide us in the magic mist
Of a land that's April-kissed,
Where the vales and distant valleys wear a veil
of amethyst.

Poet, sing the glory strain,
We would hear it once again—
Just the voice of April singing in a little country
lane.

Take us with you, Jim, to-day,
Where the yellow cowslips sway,
And a tender-lipped, sweet April slips into the arms
of May.

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A Prayer

I DO not ask the road made smooth
 Beneath my torn and bleeding feet.
I ask not Thy solicitude
 In hope of gaining journey sweet.
I have no church, I have no creed,
 But this, O God, the prayer I pray,
If I should turn from human need
 Hurl thou me back to pulseless clay.

I would not cringe beneath Thy rod,
 Nor alien be to sorrow vales;
But should you please to give me, God,
 The roses and the nightingales,
Then should I scorn human defeat
 Of fellowman, stand loftily by.
I beg thee take my victor's wreath,
 And if I cry, hear not my cry.

Elusive

SONGS are as birds—sure be the singing,
 Lack of soft words—swift they go winging.
Oh, how I yearn—souls assuaging,
 Will they return, birds I failed caging?

Villanelle

STILL there's a dream that runs through me,
To gently touch my wounds to scars—
A voice of tender memory.

I shall sing my soul's melody—
Your eyes have always been twin stars—
Still there's a dream that runs through me.

Wan lips yet murmur what's to be,
And listening love hears through the bars
A voice of tender memory.

Some mood divine yet acts as key
To waft me from all fret and jars—
Still there's a dream that runs through me.

One day the strain, love ecstasy,
Shall triumph o'er the field that mars
A voice of tender memory.

While visions last, O Sweet, I'm free
In spite of bolts and prison Czars.
Still there's a dream that runs through me
A voice of tender memory.

A Prison Sonnet

LAST night, just at the ring of bed-time bell,
I found my face pressed close against the bars.
From out upon the ocean great of stars
There came the tender tones of one loved well.
I sensed the stir of wings within my cell,
And I knew God's free space. A nightingale
Sang from the laurels; then, it seems, a veil
Of virgin white draped o'er Shame's citadel.

Perhaps you came at a great God's command,
To view what altar reared, to note if prayer
Is ever voiced within my desert land.
Ah, girl, the soul in me is now laid bare;
My wounds are touched to healing. Hope shall
live—
I heard you say last night, "I, too, forgive."

Early April

IT stormed to-day, the winds were free—
Perhaps 'tis only fancy, I
Think that mad March, the jilted, he
Came back to bid April good-bye.

The Sweat Shop

("Virtue's a luxury, hard to afford,
When a girl can't earn money enough for her board.")

BEAM after beam that tower to the sky.
Whir of machines, by busy fingers fed;
Tired eyes of pain that never know the red
Of woodland roses—and scarce wonder "Why?"
A monument that marks where girlies sigh,
And young hearts bleed to earn a "daily bread;"
A tombstone with its records "many dead—
And more unborn that it will know, to die."

O Hulk! You stand a grim and cruel abyss;
You promise much; but Satan knows you've led
Young feet to paths of shame; there's in your kiss
Licentiousness a harlot well might dread.
Whatever gods there be, we ask: "Is this
The Girl haven for which the Hewer bled?"

Aftermath

Some day, now that the mad desire is o'er,
And heart and soul invites the "used to be,"
I'll come to knock upon a long closed door—
God will be good and open it to me.

I have been broken on the wheels of fate,
I have been wounded, and I know the sting
Of roads unfriendly—one remembered gate
Leading to you will scar all suffering.

To the Discouraged Poet

YOU'VE quit? You will not write again?
You've given your last line?
You're lost in life's great fog and vain?
But Boy, you've got a spine!
And you can overlook the bet
That life's a broken toy;
Your soul is raw, old scout, but yet
You're going to find new joy.

Out of the winter comes glad spring—
Out of the bog a flower—
And on some other day you'll sing;
You cannot lose the power
That God has placed within your soul;
In spite of pain and sting
A dreamer dreams one only goal:
Life, and a song to sing.

You're hurt, and think but of the ache,
But, Boy, take it from me,
The music sleeps now, soon to wake—
All ills have remedy.
Like music of a stream, your song,
Shall flow again and sing,
Come back, old scout, we've waited long,
Come back and give us Spring.

Overture

THE world is at your feet, gold-girl,
And I, banished afar,
Must only know, and no more see
The radiance of the star.

Swing wide the portals of your heart,
To him—I'll keep the miles;
Give some one else the warmth of lips
And some one else your smiles.

But, if there ever comes the day
When things don't break just right,
And your path is a thorny one,
May I have, then, your fight?

Your days are filled with sunshine now,
There's not a hint of care.
But, oh, I hope you'll send for me
When you have tears to share.

Tommy Explains

A LITTLE girl what's lame she lives across the
street from me,
I guess her Mother is too poor to have a Christmas
tree.

But the lame girl, oh, gee! I know, will smile on
Christmas day,
For Santa's going to leave a gift for her across the
way.

The other girls don't play with her—I think it is a
shame

The way they stick their noses up just because
she's lame.

But Mother told me yesterday, an' she knows, I am
sure,

That Jesus always loved the lame and sorrowful
and poor.

I got a dollar gave to me to spend on Christmas toys,
An' when I think of presents that I'll buy for girls
and boys,

I kinda think the nicest one, the biggest of the lot,
Will go across the street to one what thinks she is
forgot.

I told my Mother all my plan, an' she sat down an'
cried,

She said it made her think of one who also was
denied.

Oh, gee! I know a kid that's just as glad as he can be,
'Cause he will make a lame girl glad—across the
street from me.

The Wanderer's Litany

THEY pity me, that church-folk clan,
They say I have no creed.
Loafer and tramp—an "also ran,"
But as for me, my need:
The friendly hills at evening's close,
A bed beneath a tree,
The fragrance of a wayside rose—
That's creed enough for me.

I only want the birds, and things
That offer up a share
Of joy to one who ever clings
To that which seems a prayer.
The flower that has the power to start
Me singing, as I trod,
The things I gather to my heart
Must sure belong to God.

Each day I see a world new born—
Church creed is not for me—
A joy in store, tomorrow's morn,
Woke by bird melody.
The valleys in their crimson glow,
The nectar of the streams—
I go where only gods may go
In pageantries of dreams.

"Loafer and tramp"—an "also ran."
But I am well content.
Society may cast its ban—
There's baser banishment.
What church have you that's more sublime
Than nature's mystery?
I join the birds at Vesper-time,
That's creed enough for me.

Unfettered

INTO his dungeon, cold, and grim, and dark,
God sent a ray of light, the divine spark
Of dreams. And, lo, the man again was whole,
For stars and flowers knew his unfet-
tered soul.

“Thirty”

THE shop don't seem to be the same as
'twas when he was here;
The “bunch” sit 'round quite solemn-
like, and not a word of cheer
Is spoke as we go to the grind—oftimes we
hear a sigh,
We never thought the “thirty” call
would come so soon for Guy.

He used to swing a pencil here, and write the
clingy stuff,
The kind that makes ye Ed. remark,
“That's copy, sure enough.”
No matter just how hard the grind, how crush-
ing was the day,
Guy always came up smiling, with the
best of things to say.

His desk is empty over there, and his machine
is still;
We do not hear his cheery voice, How
goes it, Jack, or Bill?
The room seems still and vacant, there is
scarce a bit of sound—
It's hard to realize that Guy sleeps un-
derneath the ground.

Some other “writer chap” once said that, up
there in the sky
A comrade hangs a lantern to guide
earthly comrades by;
If such be so we will not mind life's crushing
jolts and jars,
We'll see the light Guy hangs for us up
there among the stars.

If real good fellowship is worth a portion of
God's love,
We know that Guy is working on the
Great Sheet up above.
And when the day shall come for us, the time
to say "goodbye,"
We hope the Master Editor will let us
work with Guy.

He grabbed his "thirty" from the hook; his
desk is vacant there.
We laid a copy of the sheet with him
and said a prayer.
Then in our soul of souls we vowed, when
comes our turn to die,
We'd have so lived that God would put
us "writing space" with Guy.

Things That Are

“THIS world is going to the dogs,”
He said—then heaved a sigh.
I looked out on the world, and saw
A star flame in the sky.

“This life ain’t worth a darn”—He said
That same with mighty zest.
I looked upon this life, and saw
The sun sink in the west.

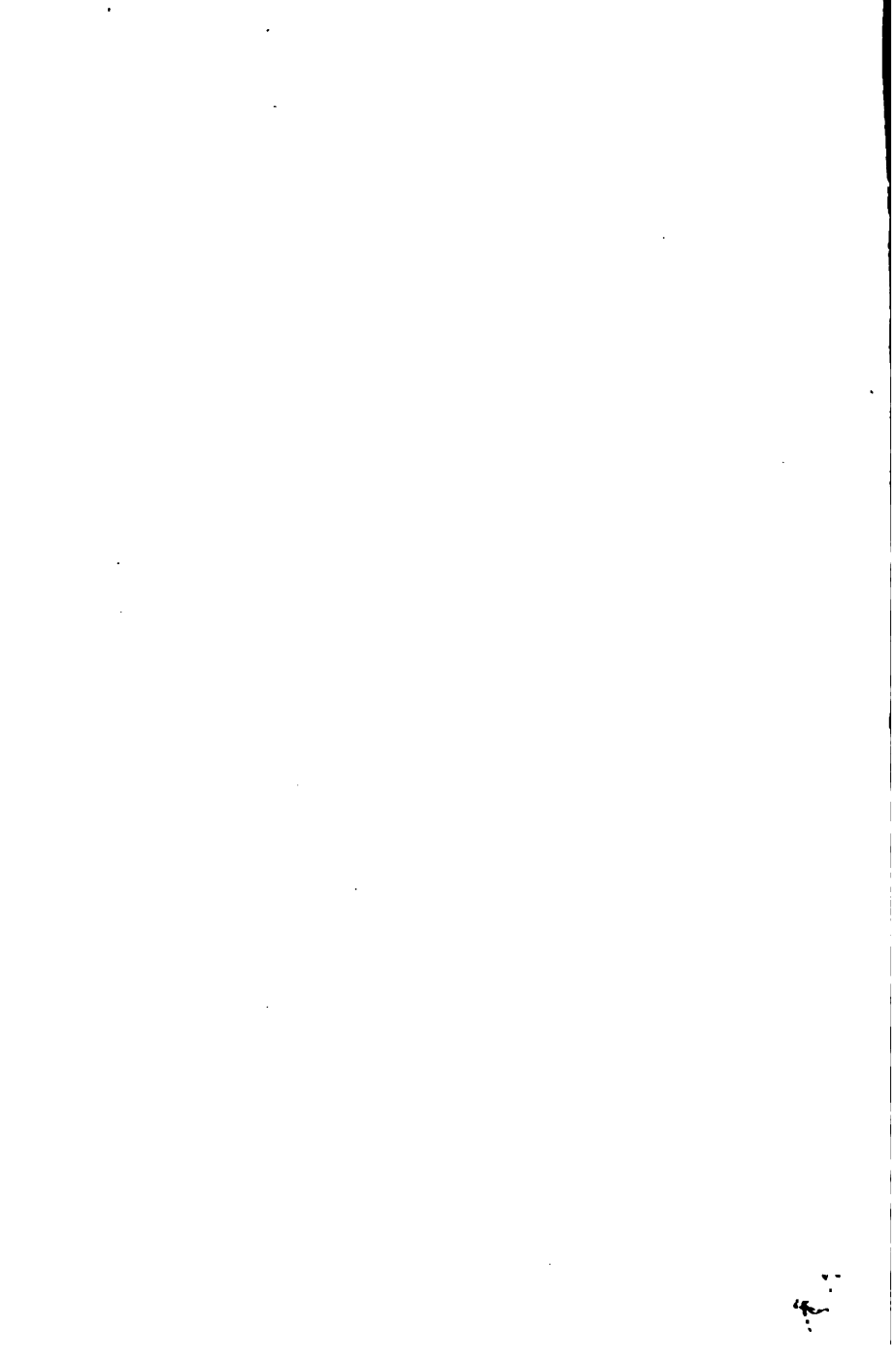
“What use is it to live?” he said.
And when he had his say,
I gazed into a hut, and saw
A child kneel down to pray.

“There is no hope, no faith,” he said.
“There’s base in everything.”
Twilight stole softly through the bars,
I heard a wild bird sing.

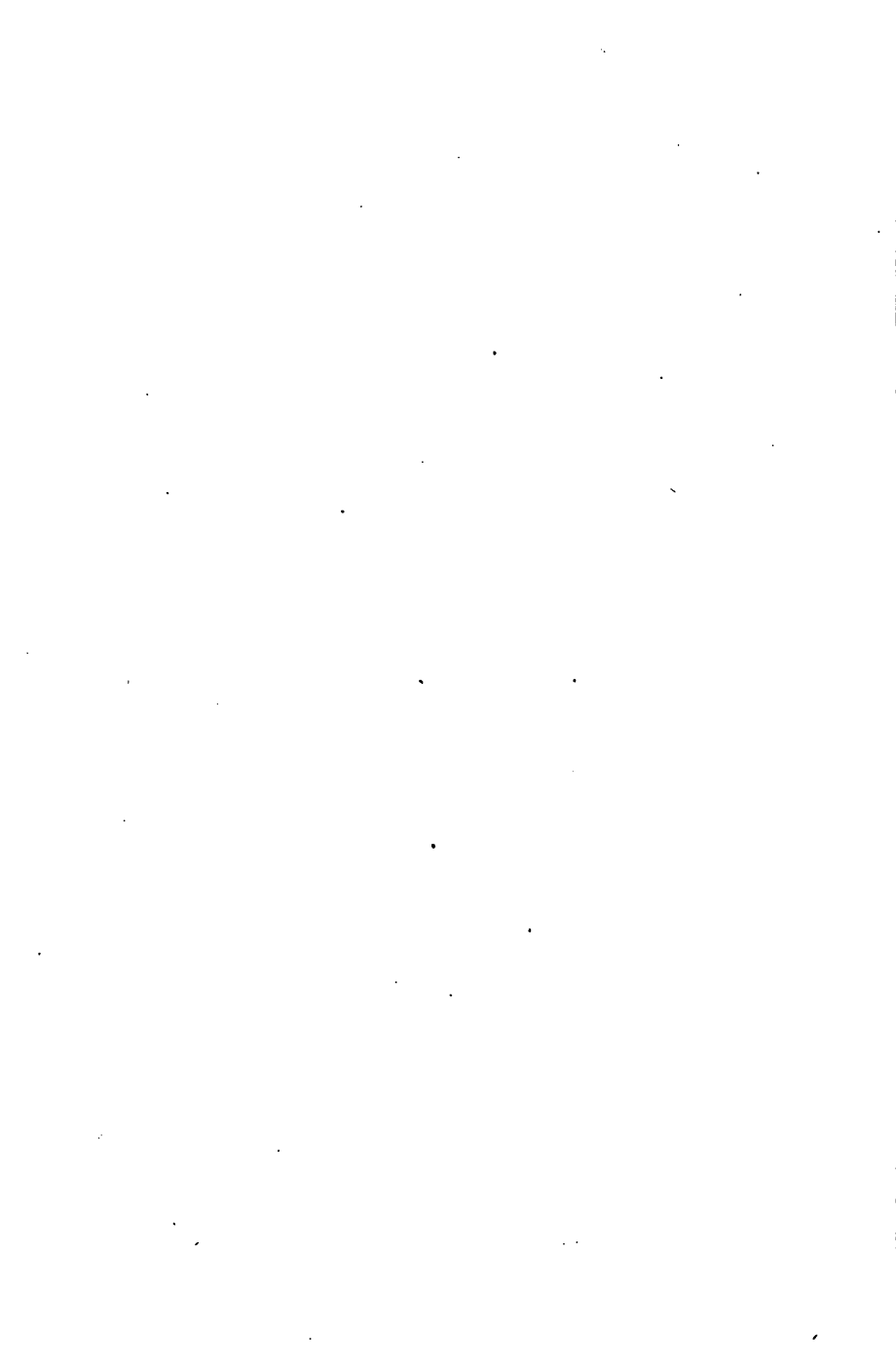
The Secret

IF things were just as they should be,
This life would be quite tame.
For all of us would have the key,
And fools could beat the game.

But life is life because we paint
And gloss o’er things that mar.
It’s all in taking things that “Ain’t”
And changing them to “Are.”











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